

**Performance Measures
Fourth Judicial District**

Self Help Service Center





Background Information on the Self Help Center

The Court's Self Help Center connects people with legal resources and information to improve access to justice. It offers a variety of services to people with court actions including educational materials, forms, referrals, brief legal advice, help with understanding court orders, help preparing for court, review of completed court forms, and more.

There are two Self Help Centers: one located in the Family Justice Center to help with Family Court matters and one in the Government Center to help with all other types of cases. The centers have multi-lingual staff to help our court users that speak a language other than English.

♦ Use of the services of the Self Help Centers

- ♦ In 2004 the Self Help Center served approximately 26,000 people.

Customer— *Provide fair & equal treatment, Access to justice*

♦ Court users perception of the services of the Self Help Centers

- ♦ 61 Respondents
- ♦ 81.1% reported a particular service was "Very Helpful"
- ♦ 18.3% indicated the service was "Somewhat Helpful"
- ♦ 0.6% indicated the service was "Not Helpful"

Performance Measures Fourth Judicial District

Customer- *Provide fair & equal treatment, Access to justice*

- ◆ Is the court perceived as fair to litigants and other constituents?
- ◆ Do litigants perceive they are being listened to?
- ◆ Do litigants understand the orders given by the court?
- ◆ Do litigants perceive that cases are resolved in a timely manner?

Is the court perceived as fair to litigants and other constituents?	
Self Represented Litigants who had a court appearance	8.28
Do users of the Self Help Center perceive that the Self Help Center staff listened to them?	
Court users of the Self Help Center assessing Staff	7.85
Do users of the Self Help Center understand the instructions the staff gave them?	
Court users of the Self Help Center assessing Staff instructions	7.56
Self Represented Litigants who had a court appearance	7.20
Do users of the Self Help Center perceive the service they received was timely?	
Court users of the Self Help Center assessing service	7.27

On a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 means strongly disagree and 9 means strongly agree.

Prior research tells us that satisfaction with the court process has more to do with fair treatment than with favorable case outcomes. In addition litigant satisfaction leads to viewing court authority as legitimate, which in turn leads to increased compliance with court orders.

Court Users of the Self Help Center = 61 respondents
Self Represented Litigants = 70 respondents

Performance Measures Fourth Judicial District

Customer— *Provide fair & equal treatment, Access to justice*

◆ Services provided at the Self Help Centers and perception of helpfulness

Service Provided	Number who Used Service	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful
Staff help with forms.	43	83.7%	16.3%	0%
Written instructions for filling out forms.	35	77.1%	22.9%	2.9%
Staff to answer my questions.	58	89.7%	10.3%	0%
Interpretation or translation assistance.	4	100%	0%	0%
Workshop	2	100%	0%	0%
Help preparing for a court hearing.	31	77.4%	22.6%	0%
Help following up with court orders.	20	80.0%	20.0%	0%
Educational materials (pamphlets, books, videos).	27	66.7%	33.3%	0%
Information on where to get more help.	40	82.5%	17.5%	0%
Met with an attorney (not court staff).	20	85.0%	15.0%	0%
Referred to an attorney outside the court for legal help.	8	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%
Help using computer to obtain information or prepare documents.	6	66.7%	33.3%	0%
Made an appointment.	19	100.0%	0%	0%
Other	3	66.7%	33.3%	0%

61 users of the Self Help Centers were asked to identify which services they used, and to rate each type of service as "Very Helpful", "Somewhat Helpful" or "Not Helpful".

Performance Measures Fourth Judicial District



Process - Fair & timely case processing, Effective & efficient case processing

♦ **Self Help Center services save time and resources?**

Although savings, in terms of time and resources, are difficult to quantify, a 2004 evaluation of the Self Help Center concludes that the services provided by the Self Help Center saves resources (see web-site listed below for full report). The report concludes that the Hennepin County District Court Self Help Centers and Programs provide a mature and effective service to the courts and litigants of the County, and a useful model to the whole country.

Approximately 30 interviews with stakeholders such as, judges, clerks, bar association partners, court administrators, program staff and bar volunteers, as well as a variety of surveys completed by court staff at all levels, support the following conclusions:

- All the stakeholders strongly support the programs and believe that they are critical to the effective functioning of the court.
- All the stakeholders strongly believe that the impact of the programs extends throughout the court to all its operations.
- There is a consensus among all the groups of stakeholders that the programs ultimately save court resources.
- Clerks, operations staff, and others involved in managing the flow of cases believe that the program makes a dramatic difference in the ease and efficiency of their work, and in the quality of the documents that are filed with the court.
- Judges value the program, and regard it as important in improving the flow of cases into the courtroom, and in reducing the number of frivolous or unprepared motions.
- Court managers perceive the program as critical to the overall flow and structure of the courthouse.

To view the complete report: [Report on the Self Help Centers of the Fourth Judicial District Court of the State of Minnesota. \(.pdf\)](http://www.courts.state.mn.us/districts/fourth/Measurements/selfhelp/assessment.htm) go to the website:
<http://www.courts.state.mn.us/districts/fourth/Measurements/selfhelp/assessment.htm>